

Greetings from Badlands Superintendent - Dr. Paige Baker



Welcome to Badlands National Park. The Badlands are a place of unique formations that have maintained solitude, spaciousness, and rugged untouched beauty that existed before this country was known to Europeans. Located in southwestern South Dakota, the park contains a diverse range of resources that include geological, archaeological, historical, and cultural objects and places, as well as historic structures.

Badlands National Park is the largest national park in South Dakota, as well as this region of the country, comprising some 244,000 acres. Established as a National Monument in 1939, it was re-designated as a National Park in 1978. Badlands National Park is comprised of the North Unit (the original National Monument) and the South Unit, located within the boundaries of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The White River Visitor Center located at the intersection of Highway 27 and BIA 2 coordinates all programming and visitor inquiries for those wanting to explore both the South Unit and

the Reservation. The Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority (OSPRA) has been designed by the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council to manage the South Unit with the National Park Service.

The North Unit provides programming for visitors during the summer season, a camping area with over 100 sites near Cedar Pass Lodge, and the remote Sage Creek Campground perched on the edge of the Badlands Wilderness Area. The North Unit is also home to the Ben Reifel Visitor Center and a new outdoor amphitheater (August, 2006). In cooperation with partners like Badlands Natural History Association and Forever Resorts, we have an expanded bookstore and Cedar Pass Lodge with cabins, a restaurant, and a gift shop.

Again - welcome. I know you will enjoy your stay with us. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to speak or any of the park staff. Comment forms are available throughout the park and written responses sent promptly. Thank you for visiting Badlands National Park.

Badlands On Your Own

Today, we live on a budget. What we seem to forget is the budget over which we have the most control is how we choose to spend our time. Did you budget enough time to truly enjoy Badlands National Park? The average visit is 2 hours in length - not because this is what this place is “worth” but simply because of the amount of time most people budget here while on their way to someplace else. Remember that your single vehicle entrance pass entitles you to seven days of exploration here. Show your receipt at the entrance gate and enjoy making Badlands your personal park for a week, enjoying multiple sunrises or sunsets, attending all the of the Ranger Programs, or watching for that elusive animal. Get your money’s worth. Stay awhile.

Got 2 Hours?

- Drive the entire Badlands Loop Road, including a stop at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, and take a side trip down Sage Creek Rim Road to Roberts Prairie Dog Town using the *Road Guide to Badlands National Park* available for sale at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center Bookstore (Allow 90 minutes)

- Attend a Fossil Talk or Ranger Talk, then chat with the ranger (*see reverse for schedule and locations*) (Allow 30 minutes)

Got 4 Hours?

- Drive the entire Badlands Loop Road and take a side trip down Sage Creek Rim Road to Roberts Prairie Dog Town using the *Road Guide to Badlands National Park* available for sale at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center Bookstore (Allow 90 minutes)

- Spend time at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, watching the park orientation film *Land of Stone and Light*, exploring the exhibits, and shopping at the Badlands Natural History Association bookstore (Allow 1 hour)

- Attend at least two Ranger Programs (*see reverse for schedule*) (Allow up to 90 minutes)

- Stop by the Pig Dig, located at Conata Picnic Area, 20 miles north of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center just off the Badlands Loop Road and meet a paleontologist-in-training at work. Onsite educators can answer your questions (Allow 30 minutes)

Spend The Day With Us

If you have budgeted a full day at Badlands National Park, you should have enough time to find your niche here - prairie, rugged geology, wilderness, wildlife, or immersion in 12,000 years of human history.

Be Prepared

- Are you wearing closed toe shoes with ankle support?
- Do you have at least 1 gallon of water per person?
- Do you have rain or wind gear, sunscreen, and a hat?

Activities

- Drive the entire Badlands Loop Road and Sage Creek Rim Road, spending time at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center to view the film *Land of Stone and Light*, explore the exhibits, and chat with a ranger (Allow 3.5 hours)

- Take in two or more of our ten or more daily ranger led programs throughout the park (Allow 1 hour or more)

- Walk Cliff Shelf Nature Trail, Window Trail, Door Trail, and Prairie Winds Trail (1.4 miles total, all trails) (Allow 1.5 hours)

- Continue on Sage Creek Rim Road to the town of Scenic, then on to the White River Visitor Center operated by Oglala Sioux Tribal members. Immerse yourself in native America. (Allow 2 hours)

- From the White River Visitor Center, you may return to the North Unit of Badlands National Park (1 hour), continue on to the Black Hills (1.5 hours), or route yourself to Rapid City. (Allow 1.25 hours)

Maps and More

Each vehicle paying an entrance fee or showing a National Parks Pass receives a copy of the Badlands National Park Official Map and Guide. It includes a brief introduction to the park and its resources, some safety tips and regulations, a small regional map including portions of the Black Hills and our gateway communities, and a large scale, full color map of Badlands National Park. Use this map with the *Prairie Preamble*, the park’s activity guide, to route yourself around the area. This publication is updated as needed, funded by Congress and your entrance dollars, and designed and printed by the National Park Service at the Washington level. All park maps, including regional maps, can be downloaded from the park’s website at <http://www.nps.gov/badl>

If you plan on backpacking or are just a map collector, waterproof, tearproof maps of Badlands National Park are available for purchase at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center Bookstore or available via mail order by contacting Badlands Natural History Association at 605/433-5489. BNHA also carries a wide range of U.S. Forest Service maps of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland that surrounds much of Badlands National Park.

Prairie Preamble

The *Prairie Preamble* is a full color, eight-page guide to Badlands National Park. It includes detailed information on park regulations, trail descriptions, camping and backpacking information, and articles on park resource issues, such as wildlife, history, and planning efforts. The *Preamble* is available from mid-May until supplies are distributed in the fall each year. This publication is updated in February each year and funded by your entrance dollars. (*Thanks!*) The *Preamble* is written and designed by Resource Education staff of Badlands National Park. It can also be downloaded online at the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/badl>

Free Publications

A wide range of free publications are available on special topics at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. Called *site bulletins*, these double-sided publications are written and designed by Resource Education staff of Badlands National Park to meet short-term needs or provide more in-depth information on special resource issues or visitor activities. Printing is funded by a variety of sources - grants, Badlands Natural History Association, entrance fee dollars. Availability is based on funding available. All site bulletins can be downloaded at the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/badl>

Topics available at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center:

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| ●Air Quality Management | ●Geology of the White River Badlands |
| ●Archaeology of the White River Badlands | ●Homesteading in the Badlands |
| ●Artist in Residence Program | ●Horse Use in Badlands National Park |
| ●Backpacking in Badlands National Park | ●Managing Exotic Plant Species |
| ●Badlands Gunnery Range | ●Paleontology in the White River Badlands |
| ●Badlands Scenic Byway | ●Photographing the Badlands |
| ●Bicycling in Badlands National Park | ●Restoration of Native Wildlife |
| ●Big Pig Dig | ●Sage Creek/Badlands Wilderness |
| ●Cedar Pass Lodge | ●Suggested Extended Cycling Routes |
| ●Fire Management | ●Wildlife Watching |
| ●Fossil Hunters (History) | ●Wounded Knee Massacre |

Birds of Badlands National Park and *Nature Notes: Restoration* are also available at no cost at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, printed by BNHA. These are in booklet format. We also have the text to our park brochure available in German, French, Japanese, Portuguese, and Italian.




Ranger Programs and More

Today in the Badlands

These programs run from Saturday, June 10 through Saturday, August 19, 2006




Badlands National Park is in the Mountain Time Zone. Some programs are presented at overlooks or trails throughout the park. These locations are identified in the park newspaper and park brochure. You can also find them by watching for white signs announcing programs along the Badlands Loop Road, a South Dakota Scenic Byway. Limited programs will be available after August 19. Check park bulletin boards or at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for details.

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Guided Hikes and Walks

Badlands Scramble	7:00 a.m. Fridays through Mondays ONLY, July 1 Through August 14	PROGRAM LIMITED TO EIGHT; MUST SIGN UP IN ADVANCE
Take this opportunity to explore off-trail in a rarely explored area of the Badlands near park headquarters. This program is quite strenuous and should not be attempted by those with knee, back, or heart problems. Explorers must be at least 12 years of age to participate. Group size is limited to 8 explorers. Hike lasts 3.5 hours. Sign up at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center information desk no later than 7 p.m. the day before the program. You may sign up in advance by emailing name, phone number, number in party, and confirmation of ages/physical conditions to badl_information@nps.gov Once confirmed, you will be given directions to meet your ranger. Wear a hat, sturdy hiking boots, sunscreen, and long pants. Bring water, snacks, and a jacket.		
Geology Walk	8:30 a.m. Daily	
Learn about the geologic story of the White River Badlands on this 45 minute walk. Meet at the covered shelter near the Door Trailhead, located at the far east end of the Door/Window Parking Area one mile south of the Northeast Entrance Station on the Badlands Loop Road. Wear a hat and closed-toe shoes. Terrain is varied.		
Prairie Walk	6:00 p.m. Daily	
Join a park ranger for this easy, 1/2 mile walk into the prairie. Meet in front of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for an exploration of plants and place. Wear closed-toe shoes and bring a hat, sunglasses, and water.		

Talks and Illustrated Programs

Fossil Talk	10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m.	Daily	
Find out how fossils can tell us the story of ancient life in the Badlands and why they should be protected at this 15 - 20 minute talk. Presented in the classroom of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center during Fossil Exhibit Trail renovation. The program may be moved to Fossil Exhibit Trail in August. Check at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.			
Ranger Talk	2:30 p.m. Daily		
Learn more about Badlands National Park at this 20 minute talk. Individual rangers choose their topic - it may be wildlife, history, wilderness, or a surprise. Meet your ranger in the classroom of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for an air-conditioned break from Badlands heat and wind!			
Prairie Dog Talk	1:30 p.m. Daily		
Meet your ranger at Roberts Prairie Dog Town for this 15 minute exploration of life in the park's largest town. This prairie dog town is located 5 miles west of the intersection of the Badlands Loop Road (paved) and the Sage Creek Road (unpaved). Wear a hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses. Bring water.			
Evening Program	9:00 p.m. Daily		(Starting August 1st, the evening program will be given at 8:30 p.m.)
Join a park ranger for a 40 minute audiovisual presentation in the theater of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center. A weekly listing of program topics is posted on bulletin boards, at Cedar Pass Lodge, at the Visitor Center, and at local businesses. After July 1, the Evening Program will end in time for you to take part in the Night Prowl!			

Special Treats

Junior Ranger Program (Outdoors)	10:30 a.m. Daily	
Calling all visitors between 7 and 12 years of age! Meet at the shelter at the Cedar Pass Campground Amphitheater parking lot for a 45 minute adventure into an aspect of the Badlands. Wear closed-toe shoes and a hat. It may be a walk, a game, or another activity. Attendees will be awarded a Junior Ranger badge. Parents are also welcome!		
Story Time	11:30 Wednesdays	
For our youngest - or youngest at heart - visitors. Meet in the classroom of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for a 30 minute storytelling session. Presenter may read a children's book or tell a Western story from the Lakota or cowboy cultures. This program may be available other days and times, depending on staffing. Check at the information desk.		
Junior Ranger Program (Indoors)	4:30 p.m. Daily	
Want a "take home" project? Visitors between 7 and 12 years of age should meet in the classroom of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for this 45 minute craft-based program. Attendees will be awarded a Junior Ranger badge. Parents are also welcome!		
Night Prowl	10:00 p.m. Daily, starting July 1	(Starting August 1st, the Night Prowl will be given at 9:30 p.m.)
Explore the Badlands at night and enjoy our famous clear night skies. Meet your park ranger in front of the Ben Reifel Visitor Center for a night trip into the Badlands. Those attending the Evening Program can simply join their ranger after the program. After a 400 meter walk along a drainage, explorers will arrive at a natural amphitheater for a 30 minute program. Topics could be astronomy, night animals, or folklore. Wear closed-toe shoes and a jacket. Bring a flashlight and a blanket or towel to sit on the ground.		

Program Cancellations: The Badlands are famous for dramatic lightning storms. If lightning is visible from the program location, the program will be cancelled for employee and visitor safety. Programs are typically not cancelled due to rain. Be prepared for changing weather conditions.

Advance reservation programs, such as the Badlands Scramble, cannot be cancelled more than one hour prior to the program start due to its early morning schedule and the weather variability. We apologize for any inconvenience to those who arrive to find their program cancelled due to

A Word About Your Park Education Staff

Our 2006 staff is made up of full-time and seasonal park rangers and guides, as well as volunteer interns from universities across the country. Due to a lack of funding for paid staff, we use volunteers to operate at previous levels of service. Interns receive training, supervision, housing, and a reimbursement for food and travel expenses. Costs typically run \$2000 per intern. If you would like to sponsor an education internship, please contact the Director of Resource Education at (605) 433-5240 or email us at badl_interpretation@nps.gov

Special Events

As we grow into our new facilities - renovated visitor center, new theater, classroom, improved outdoor amphitheater (August, 2006), enhanced Fossil Exhibit Trail (September, 2006), the National Park Service and its partners at Badlands National Park will offer special events. Check at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center or bulletin boards throughout the park for added attractions! During the 2006 Perseid Meteor Shower, the moon is at full cycle so the shower will be less dramatic than in previous years. The Perseid Shower peaks on August 12 so a special astronomy program is planned. Remember to check the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/badl> for updates